

REMARKS

Applicants request favorable reconsideration of this application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks. Of claims 1, 2, 4-13, and 15-20 that were pending in the application, claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 8-10, and 12 were rejected in the Office Action. Applicants appreciate the allowance of claims 6, 7, 11, 13 and 15-20.

By way of this Amendment, Applicants have amended claim 1 in a manner that does not alter the scope of protection but that highlights a particular limitation, as later discussed in detail. Accordingly, claims 1, 2, 4-13, and 15-20 remain pending for further consideration. The amendments made herein do not raise new issues and, therefore, the foregoing amendments and the following remarks should be entered and considered.

Rejection of Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 8-10, and 12

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 8-10, and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being obvious when considering U.S. Patent No. 6,306,057 (“Morisawa”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,434,928 (“Manaka”). For the following reasons, Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

As amended herein, claim 1 (*i.e.*, the claim from which claims 2, 4, 5, 8-10, and 12 depend) recites a drive apparatus for a hybrid vehicle. The drive apparatus includes, among other possible things (*italic emphasis added*):

- an internal combustion engine;
- a damper connected on one side thereof to a rear of the engine;
- a motor-generator connected on one side thereof to another side of the damper, the motor-generator being capable of starting the engine;
- a magnetic clutch connected on one side thereof to another side of the motor-generator, the magnetic clutch being configured to engage by electromagnetic force;
- a transmission connected to the internal combustion engine via the damper, the motor-generator, and the clutch;
- a starter motor connected to the damper, the starter motor being capable of starting the engine; and
- a dividing wall of magnetic material* that is disposed between the motor-generator and the magnetic clutch.

As hereafter explained in detail, Morisawa and Manaka (standing alone or combined) fail to teach or suggest such a drive apparatus.

As above-italicized, claim 1 recites a “dividing wall of magnetic material that is disposed between the motor-generator and the magnetic clutch.” Support for this limitation is provided, *e.g.*, in ¶ [0016], which states: “Front cover 1a is made of a magnetic material such as iron, and serves to prevent magnetic force of motor-generator 20 from affecting magnetic

clutch 30.” The Examiner acknowledges a first of Morisawa various deficiencies, *i.e.*, that Morisawa fails to teach or suggest a magnetic clutch. The Examiner fails, however, to acknowledge Morisawa’s second and third deficiencies. Specifically, Morisawa fails to teach or suggest a dividing wall between the clutch 17 and the motor generator 6 (*i.e.*, Morisawa’s second deficiency). Moreover, as a result of this deficiency, Morisawa also fails to teach or suggest a dividing wall that is formed of a “magnetic material” (*i.e.*, Morisawa’s third deficiency).

To cure the first of Morisawa’s deficiencies (*i.e.*, the failure to teach or suggest a magnetic clutch), the Examiner turns to Manaka. Although Manaka teaches a magnetic clutch (thereby arguably curing the first of Morisawa’s deficiencies), Manaka fails to cure the other deficiencies of Morisawa. Specifically, Manaka teaches magnetic clutches 32, 34, a motor 33, and a generator 31. Manaka fails, however, to teach or suggest a dividing wall, which separates the magnetic clutch 32/34 and the motor/generator 33/31 and which is formed of magnetic material. As a result, Manaka fails to cure at least the second and third of Morisawa’s deficiencies.

For at least the aforementioned reasons, it is clear that neither Morisawa nor Manaka teaches or suggests at least the above-italicized limitation of claim 1. Accordingly, Morisawa and Manaka (standing alone or combined) can not be used to reject claim 1, or any claim dependent thereon, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Moreover, as claims 2, 4, 5, 8-10, and 12 depend from claim 1, each of these dependent claims is also allowable over Morisawa and Manaka, without regard to the other patentable limitations recited therein. In light of the foregoing, a withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 8-10, and 12 is both warranted and earnestly solicited.

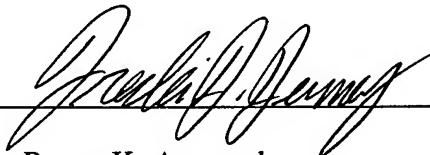
CONCLUSION

For the aforementioned reasons, claims 1, 2, 4-13, and 15-20 are now in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned if such communication would expedite the prosecution of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

Date AUG 12 2005

By



Pavan K. Agarwal
Registration No. 40,888

Customer Number: 22428
FOLEY & LARDNER LLP
3000 K Street, N.W.
Suite 500
Washington, D.C. 20007-5143

Frederic T. Tenney
Registration No. 47,131

Telephone: (202) 672-5300
Facsimile: (202) 672-5399

Attorneys for Applicants

THE COMMISSIONER IS HEREBY AUTHORIZED TO CHARGE ANY ADDITIONAL FEES WHICH MAY BE REQUIRED REGARDING THIS APPLICATION UNDER 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, OR CREDIT ANY OVERPAYMENT, TO DEPOSIT ACCOUNT NO. 19-0741. SHOULD NO PROPER PAYMENT BE ENCLOSED HERewith, AS BY A CHECK BEING IN THE WRONG AMOUNT, UNSIGNED, POST-DATED, OTHERWISE IMPROPER OR INFORMAL OR EVEN ENTIRELY MISSING, THE COMMISSIONER IS AUTHORIZED TO CHARGE THE UNPAID AMOUNT TO DEPOSIT ACCOUNT NO. 19-0741. IF ANY EXTENSIONS OF TIME ARE NEEDED FOR TIMELY ACCEPTANCE OF PAPERS SUBMITTED HERewith, APPLICANT HEREBY PETITIONS FOR SUCH EXTENSION UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 AND AUTHORIZES PAYMENT OF ANY SUCH EXTENSIONS FEES TO DEPOSIT ACCOUNT NO. 19-0741.